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LETTER DATED 18 JANUARY 1992 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 718 (1991) of 31 October 1991. In it the Council, inter alia, expressed its full support for the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict and requested the Secretary-General to submit at the earliest possible date a report containing his implementation plan, including in particular a detailed estimate of the cost of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), on the understanding that this report would be the basis on which the Council would authorize the establishment of UNTAC, the budget of UNTAC to be subsequently considered and approved in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In accordance with resolution 718 (1991), survey missions have been sent to Cambodia to collect the information required for the formulation of the plan of implementation of UNTAC's mandate. On the basis of this information, the report requested by the Security Council in resolution 718 (1991) is under preparation and it will be presented to the Council as soon as possible.

The President of the Supreme National Council, H.R.H. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Cambodian parties and the international community have repeatedly stressed the need for the urgent establishment and deployment of UNTAC, in order to prevent any erosion of the peace process. I fully share these concerns.

Members of the Security Council are aware that the United Nations procedures relating to the establishment of new operations and the steps that must be taken before funds are committed and allotted to such operations represent a time-consuming process. Experience has shown that the launching of an effective operation requires funds to be committed several months prior to its planned deployment date to enable such preliminary actions as contracting for services, equipment procurement and delivery, establishment of advance parties and commissioning and installation of equipment and stores. In the case of UNTAC, the anticipated size and scope of the operation, the degraded state of Cambodia's infrastructure and climatic conditions would

compound the problem of adequate lead time, which, unless it is resolved, could create serious logistic problems and cause delay in deployment.

While the full and precise cost of deploying UNTAC has not yet been determined, there is no question that the current level of commitment authority available to the Secretary-General - either with the concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions or on his own - prior to the finalization of the budget would fall far short of the amount that would be required to initiate preparations for a timely deployment of UNTAC once the Security Council has authorized its establishment.

In order to enable me to prepare for the first phase of UNTAC's deployment, I have decided to submit to the General Assembly a proposal for the provision of an initial appropriation of US$ 200 million, which, upon the approval by the Security Council of my report on the implementation plan, should be made available immediately for the procurement of accommodation, transportation, communication and other support equipment and services. This amount would represent an assessment of initial requirements and would be taken into account against the full assessments to be levied against Member States once the budget of UNTAC has been approved by the General Assembly.

I am convinced that this approach will facilitate the timely deployment of UNTAC, thus enhancing the prospects for the restoration of a durable peace in Cambodia.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI